



# The Hedges

WORKING WITH  
BAPTIST MID-MISSIONS

# Family

Dear Friend,

This is an unusual communication for us. We are in the midst of a significant transition. This is explained inside by statements from our sending church pastor and our mission administrators. There is another statement from me which is a modified version of the announcement I delivered to my sending church on Sunday, April 28.

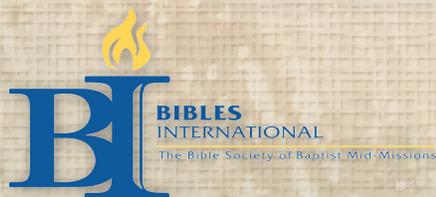
We have also included our Spring newsletter reporting on my last trip to Chad. I delayed to send it since the discussions regarding our future term of service were being made at this time. Since the conclusion of these discussions would require another communication to our donors, I thought it best to send out one communication rather than two. By considering the newsletter and statements together you get a real glimpse of God's leading in the life of a missionary family. On the one hand, it seemed as though God was paving the way to return to Chad through specific answers to prayer as stated in the prayer letter. At the same time, you can detect the uncertainty we were feeling about our future due to Rebekah's unresolved health issue. In the end, what seemed to be a door opening became shut while another door was opening before us. These workings of God are not easy, but we can say with the hymn writer, "All the way my Savior leads me."

— Joshua Hedges

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# The Hedges

SPRING 2013  
REPORT

## Family

WORKING WITH  
BAPTIST MID-MISSIONS in Chad, Africa



### “DEAD FLIES”



The fall of 1990 was a turning point in my life. My mother had insisted that I continue that year at the Christian school. This would prove to be providential because when evangelist Tom Farrel visited my high school for a week of chapel meetings I would be there. And God got my attention!

I remember responding to one particular message entitled “Dead Flies.” It was taken from the text of Ecclesiastes 10:1, “Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour.” Whatever might be said about the interpretation of this verse, folly is presented here as negative. At this time in my life I had my fair share of folly, and I needed to be rid of it. So the preacher directed my attention to the Lord Jesus the only One who could help me in my need.



I reflected on this personal story during my last workshop with the Day translation team in February. We were checking the book of Ecclesiastes. I was thrilled to think that God might someday use this same text to speak to the heart of some youth

among the Day people. Though the simple African village life to an outsider appears pure and innocent, untainted by modern western culture, the Day youth face many of the same spiritual temptations and struggles as American youth: submission to authority, lying, violence, immorality, drugs, and alcohol. As Ecclesiastes teaches, “There is nothing new under the sun.”

The Day youth need the guidance and light of God’s Word just like I did years ago. Bibles International together with partners like you are helping to make a difference in their lives in the heart of Africa! Thank you for your support!

— Joshua Hedges



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**VIDEO:** We have a short video presentation you can access at <http://vimeo.com/42721875>. The password is “preview”.



# PRAYER REQUESTS GOD ANSWERS PRAYER!

**W**e believe in the power of God and prayer. Would you join with us in prayer for these special requests?

- 1. The Day Translation-**The translation workshop in February was a success. Joshua finished Nehemiah and then checked Ezra, Esther, Ecclesiastes, and Job 1-8. Philippe has completed the translation of the OT! Now translation team will complete a series of quality checks. This will take a couple years, at least. For our next workshop we hope to finish Job. During this trip, Dr. Hantz Bernard led a workshop for two different language groups assisted by our new team member Anna Wivell. It is exciting to see our five Chad Old Testament projects moving forward so well!
- 2. Helpers-** God has answered your prayers concerning our request for a young lady to come help with our homeschooling. We received multiple responses! Now, we ask that you pray for details involved in making the arrangements with our helper.
- 3. Special Project-** God has answered your prayers concerning our request for a young lady to come help with our homeschooling. We received multiple responses! Now, we ask that you pray for details involved in making the arrangements with our helper.
- 4. God has answered your prayers concerning our request for a young lady to come help with our homeschooling.** We received multiple responses! Now, we ask that you pray for details involved in making the arrangements with our helper.
- 5. Rebekah-**We appreciate your prayers for Rebekah. Many of you are aware that she has been leaking traces of blood in her urine, a situation that we have been monitoring since last year with medical specialists. This has not affected her lifestyle. But as of now, there are still unresolved issues concerning her health which precludes a June departure. Please, pray with us as we continue to watch over her situation.
- 6. Special Projects-** We have been praying and asking for help so that we can purchase batteries for our home in Chad. The cost is \$4,000, and they have been paid for!

## BIG NEWS!



**I**n February, while I was in Chad, Barbara informed me that she was expecting! This is exciting news for our family! Maybe it will be a boy this time! On the other hand, we like girls and would not mind having another one.

We are uncertain about how this news will affect our return to Chad. Due to our age and number of children, we fall into a higher risk category. In addition, Chad does not offer the medical care necessary in case of an emergency such as hemorrhaging. So the overall counsel that has come to us is to deliver the baby in the US. So please pray with us as we seek the best plan for our delivery and return.



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# Family

## Change to Grand Rapids, Michigan

If you have followed our missionary journey you have discovered that Chad is a difficult field. It has a volatile political history. To give you some context for this, in the 1970's, we had a nation-wide persecution. All missionaries were forced out; Chadian pastors were tortured and killed-literally buried alive. I've read their stories, talked with survivors, and driven past their graves. In the 1980's, we had a civil war between the northerners and southerners. In more recent times, we have had a series of coups d'état. You may remember when I made a trip in early 2008 to secure housing that rebel factions invaded our capital, and I had to leave early. This delayed our arrival, and we waited at home for a few months wondering if the country would open up again.

If the unstable politics were not enough, numerous tropical viruses and diseases combined with a lack of medical care also make survival difficult. It hits the missionary force in Chad hard. Consider my own team of missionaries. When we left for Chad in 2008, our team consisted of two couples and three single women. The couple that was going to welcome us to Chad had to be evacuated medically because the wife had contracted some unknown virus. They eventually returned to Chad for a season and then relocated to a new ministry in Togo. But they were delayed in leaving for this new work because their son was suffering from a health situation that was likely Chad-related. The family that did welcome us left the field permanently about three months after our arrival because the wife had a heart condition that could not be monitored in Chad. (As a side note, during our three months together the husband was pulled over by road bandits. He was roughed up, stripped of all his valuables, and shot at with an M-16.) Then just before we left Chad, one of the single ladies had to leave the field permanently because her health could not be



monitored in the country. So when we left Chad in 2011 (only three years later) our small team had been reduced by two couples (one of them having a pre-teen) and one single woman. This left us as the only family serving with two single ladies.

But, these troubles do not just impact our mission family. Last year, I met a man who was held hostage for nine months by Muslims in the north. One young family lost their two-year-old son to malaria. Another family came to Chad with ten children and had to return twice to the US because of health issues. One family had to leave Chad for a few years because the wife had a serious illness that almost claimed her life. So, the husband managed his ministry by making trips to Chad from the US. (They are back in Chad today.) There was also an incident where a group of doctors were killed by road-bandits. There is more I could add, but what is astonishing is that virtually all of these events happened during our short time in Chad! And I only make reference here to the serious events while leaving out the host of less serious irritations that we all constantly live with-black-outs, water shut-offs, heat, etc....

I share some of this history so that the trouble that we have experienced in Chad may not seem so unusual to you. For sure, we have experienced our fair share of trouble. And perhaps, some may think that our experience has been unusual. But, I assure you, it has been quite usual. Wars, rumors of war, delays, sicknesses-these are the norm in Chad.

Someone may ask, "Why in the world would you take your family into that kind of environment?" But, Beloved, have we considered well Jesus' terms of discipleship? "If any man will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me"

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was right when he said Jesus' call to "take up the cross" was a summons to come and die. This is entry-level Christianity. We should not be surprised that a young man or woman or a family would take a risk to follow Jesus. What should surprise us, is that mature Christians would challenge it. We need to revisit Jesus' calls to discipleship that we find in the gospels.

While God's direction leads to taking risks, we do not want to take risks presumptuously. Many of you know that our third daughter, Rebekah, has a kidney issue that we have not been able to resolve. She has blood in her urine and scarring on her kidney. Her liver levels are running high too. We have been following this for a year now, but we do not have a clear answer as to the cause. We are sure that it is somehow Chad-related. We are still working with the kidney and liver specialists, and it is going to take some more time to figure out.

Meanwhile, we are expecting our sixth child in October. We have explored the option of having a child in Chad, but have not found much encouragement. It is possible, but risky. One OB/GYN in Chad is coming back to the US to deliver her baby! Interestingly, there is another family preparing to come to Chad. They have five children and are due in October too, and their mission team has also advised them to deliver before coming to Chad. In an emergency situation, Barbara would be in serious trouble.

Because of these issues, our mission administrators have concluded that we need to delay our return to Chad. This is not a decision based on a whim but on careful consideration of many factors. And that leads to the question of "What is the next step for us?" We were planning to return to Chad in June, but we cannot. It has been wonderful to be in Lima, Ohio during our furlough, to be with our sending church and to be with our family. But this is not the ideal location

for us to continue our ministry.

On Friday, April 19 we met with our Pastor and our mission administrators. Our administrators proposed that we relocate to Grand Rapids, Michigan for our next term. Grand Rapids is where the home office for Bibles International is located. From this base, we can continue our translation ministry in Chad by my making several trips there. When I am in the US,

I would maintain normal business working hours having my own office and participating in some of the activities of BI's administrative center. In reality, this opportunity would likely lead to an expansion of the scope of our ministry to other mission fields. Meanwhile, we can deliver a baby in the US and continue to monitor Rebekah's health situation. It also seems to be the best way to satisfy our donors. Overall, it appears to be God's will for us. Our Pastor, our mission leaders, and we all agree that this is the best plan.

But while we accept this transition mentally, it will take time for our emotions to follow. We have been planning all furlough for our return to Chad. The idea of not

returning now is like having our hearts ripped out. We miss our friends, colleagues, and our life and ministry there. This change is especially hard for Barb as she will not be able to return for awhile.

So we ask you to pray. We have many decisions to make such as finding a place to live, locating a church where our family will thrive spiritually, and even deciding what to do with our household items in Chad.

And finally, I say thank you. You are an important part of our team. We know that you love us. You think of us. You support us. You pray for us. Thank you for holding our hand as we take this next step.

